








MARYLAND COURT OF APPEALS

Justices	 Mary Ellen Barbera	 Robert McDonald	 Shirley Marie Watts	 Jonathan Biran	 Michele D. Hotten	 Brynja McDivitt Booth	 Joseph Getty
Confidence Score	Mild Democrat	Mild Democrat	Mild Democrat	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Strong Republican
Opinion Partners							
Dissenting Minority		✓		✓			✓
Determining Majority	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Lone Dissenter			✓				

- ▶ Number of justices: **7**
- ▶ Number of cases: **149**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **86.6% (129)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justice Robert McDonald (38)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **10**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **13**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justice Shirley Marie Watts (5)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **20**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Shirley Marie Watts (7)**

COURT CONTENTION

Opinion partners

In 2020, the Maryland Court of Appeals decided six cases 5-2. No justices frequently allied together in those cases. Justices Hotten and Watts allied in the dissent twice in those cases, which was more frequently than any other pair of justices. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justice Hotten recorded an Indeterminate Confidence Score and Justice Watts recorded a Mild Democratic Confidence Score.

Dissenting minority

In 2020, the Maryland Court of Appeals decided four cases by split decision. In two of those cases Justices Biran, McDonald, and Getty were the dissenting minority. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justice Biran recorded an Indeterminate Confidence Score, Justice Getty recorded a Strong Republican Confidence Score, and Justice McDonald recorded a Mild Democratic Confidence Score.

Determining majority

In two of the cases decided by split decision, Justices Barbera, Booth, Hotten, and Watts were in the majority. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justices Barbera and Watts recorded Mild Democratic Confidence Scores and Justices Booth and Hotten recorded Indeterminate Confidence Scores.

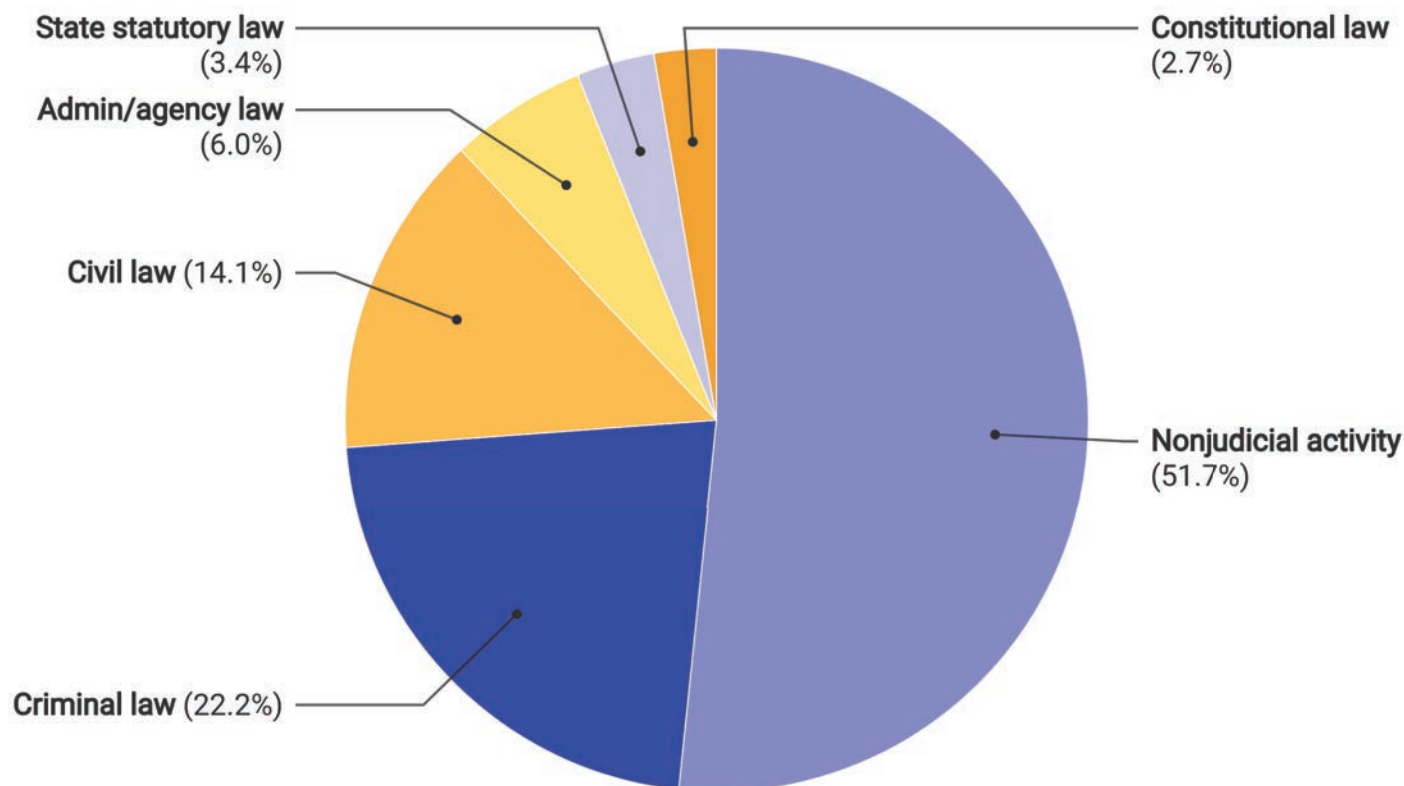
Lone dissenter

Justice Watts dissented alone six times in 2020, which was more than any other justice on the court. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justice Watts recorded a Mild Democratic Confidence Score.

COURT JURISDICTION

The Court of Appeals has exclusive jurisdiction over death penalty appeals, cases involving legislative redistricting, and issues concerning removal of elected officials and is responsible for answering broad legal questions. The court has authority to make administrative, practical and procedural rules, all of which have “the force of law.” The Court of Appeals is also responsible for determining admission to the state bar and is in charge of disciplinary proceedings for ethical and legal violations by lawyers and the judiciary.

Case types decided by Maryland Court of Appeals, 2020



BALLOTPEDIA

The most common case category heard by the Maryland Court of Appeals in 2020 was nonjudicial activity law. Of the 149 cases it heard, 77 were nonjudicial activity cases, or 51.7 percent of its total caseload for the year. A case is considered nonjudicial activity if it does not involve a formal hearing and discussion before the court.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were criminal law cases. A criminal case involves a final criminal appeal before the court of last resort. The Maryland Court of Appeals heard 33 criminal cases in 2020, or 22.1 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were civil cases. A civil case is one that involves a dispute between two parties, one of whom seeks reparations or damages. The Maryland Court of Appeals heard 21 civil cases in 2020, or 14.1 percent of its total caseload for the year.